

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 L-02 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, GR

SUBJECT: GOG SPOKESMAN DENOUNCES PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS

REF: ATHENS 0539

1. GOG SPOKESMAN STATED JANUARY 22 THAT GOVERNMENT DISAPPROVED OF YESTERDAY'S STUDENT DEMONSTRATION (ATHENS 0539), AND INTENDS TO DISCOURAGE DEMONSTRATIONS IN FUTURE WHICH DO NOT SERVE LEGITIMATE AIMS. SPOKESMAN REMARKED THAT NATION IS FACING SERIOUS PROBLEMS AND PUBLIC OPINION SHOULD NOT BE DIVERTED BY CLAMOR CAUSED BY SMALL GROUPS. HE INDICATED THAT "IF THE SITUATION CONTINUES THE GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE TO PROHIBIT THE HOLDING OF SUCH DEMONSTRATIONS". GOG SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT GOVERNMENT WAS ALREADY WELL ALONG ON MEETING DEMANDS OF YESTERDAY'S DEMONSTRATION--"DEJUNTIZATION" OF UNIVERSITIES AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DEMOCRATIC CONSITUION. HE ALSO NOTED THAT PUBLIC HAS LODGED COMPLAINTS OVER DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH ARE BEING HELD DAILY AND DISRUPT REGULAR ACTIVITIES IN ATHENS.

2. DESPITE EARLIER FORECASTS, STUDENT/YOUTH DEMONSTRATION YESTERDAY CAME OFF AS MINOR AFFAIR. APPROXIMATELY 3,000 STUDENTS GATHERED AT ATHENS UNIVERSITY, LISTENED TO USUAL HARANGUES FROM KNE, ESON AND PASOK LEADERS, AND
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THEN DISPERSED PEACEABLY. SLOGANS PAINTED

ON BANNERS AND CHANTED BY DEMONSTRATORS WERE TRADITIONAL LEFTIST/COMMUNIST ONES--"BREAD, EDUCATION AND FREEDOM," "JUNTA OUT OF UNIVERSITY," "FREEDOM TO CYPRUS," "IMPERIALISM IS ENEMY NUMBER ONE." THERE WERE NO INCIDENTS REPORTED AND NO MARCH TO UK OR U.S. EMBASSIES. (DEMONSTRATION OF ABOUT 1,500 YOUTHS AT IRAKLION, CRETE, JANUARY 22 WAS ALSO PEACEFUL AND NOTABLY VOID OF ANTI-AMERICAN SLOGANEERING.)

3. GOG SPOKESMAN'S DENUNCIATION OF CONTINUING DEMONSTRATIONS MAY TAMP DOWN YOUTH ENTHUSIASM FOR STREET ACTIVITY AND SHOULD HELP ASSUAGE RECENT PUBLIC GRUMBLINGS OVER PERMISSIVENESS OF GOG TOWARD STUDENTS AND LEFTIST YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED NUMEROUS REPORTS OF PUBLIC APPREHENSION OVER PERSISTENT PACE OF DEMONSTRATIONS--SOME SOURCES SUGGESTED DEMONSTRATIONS INDIRECTLY ERODED GOG STRENGTH WHILE OTHERS COMPLAINED THAT CONTINUED AGITATION IN THE STREETS WOULD AFFECT BUSINESS AND PARTICULARLY ANNUAL FEBRUARY SALES SHOPPING SPREE.
KUBISCH

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